

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00240 041042Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2986
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UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0240

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TAGS: EAID, PINT, GR
SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE NEWS:: COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY PICKS UP

REF: THESSALONIKI 0225

1. THE PACE OF THE CITY LIFE PICKED UP NOTICEABLY
AROUND AUGUST 1 AS STORES BEGAN SUMMER SALES AND REMAINED OPEN
AFTERNOON AND EVENING HOURS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE JUNE 19.
A STRONG TREMOR (4.3 RICHTER) MIDNIGHT NIGHT AUGUST 2/3 SENT APART-
MENT DWELLERS WHO HAD RETURNED TO THEIR OWN BEDS SCURRYING BACK
TO TENTS, WHICH PROVIDENTLY HAD BEEN LEFT PITCHED. MAJORITY
OF THESSALONIANS ARE STILL REFUSING TO SLEEP IN THEIR HIGH-RISE
DWELLINGS.

2. CARPING AT GOVERNMENT RESTORATION MEASURES
CONTINUES TO DOMINATE LOCAL NEWS: A PERCEIVED
FAILURE TO GET BEYOND THE "ANNOUNCEMENT-OF -MEASURES-
PHASE" IS THE PRIMARY CRITICISM. GOEVRN-
MENT DECISION TO FREEZE RENT LEVELS FOR TWO YEARS
COULD BE HELPFUL, BUT ONE CONSULATE EMPLOYEE POINTS
OUT THAT FAIRLY COMMON PRACTICE OF REGISTERING
RENT CONTRACT AT LESS THAN THE AMOUNT
ACTUALLY PAID (FOR INCOME TAX EVASION PURPOSES)
MAY MAKE FREEZE EASY TO EVADE. LOCAL TECHNICAL CHAMBER OF
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COMMERCE (PRESIDENT OF WHICH, SOTIRIOS KOUVELAS, WAS
DEFEATED ON THE EDIK TICKET IN PARLIAMENTARY RACE
LAST NOVEMBER) CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT FOR FAILURE
TO TAKE MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD RESTORATION BUSI-
NESS FOR LOCAL CONSTRUCTION FIRMS. WE STILL HAVE
NOT SEEN MUCH REPAIR WORK AROUND THE CITY:
DEMOLITION WORK IS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS, HOWEVER.

3. COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATIONS
FOR THE PROTECTION OF THESSALONIKI' S ENVIRONMENT,
A GROUP OF UNIVERSITYAFFILIATED EXPERTS WHO
PROBABLY HAVE THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO MAKE THE
JUDGMENTS REPORTED REFTEL BUT WHO MAY ALSO BE
IN PART POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, HAS BEEN QUIET
SINCE LAST WEEK. STRIKE OF ESSO-PAPPAS
WORKERS HAS NOT YET TAKEN PLACE.
ZACHARY

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